



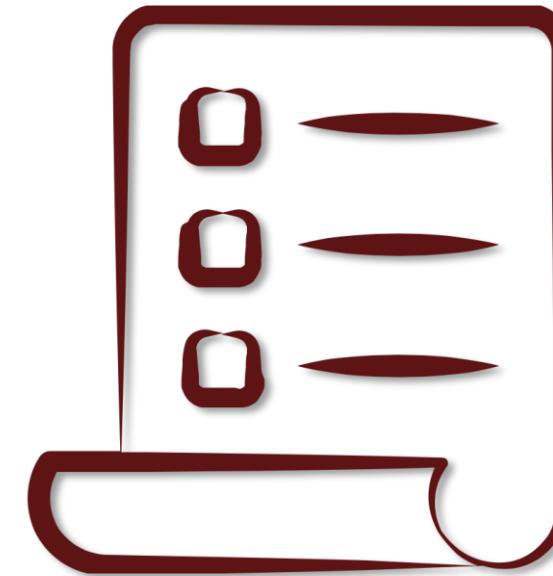
# HOUSING PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

JULY 1, 2021



# AGENDA

- Summary of Community Engagement
  - Group Interviews
  - Google Forms
  - Community Forum
- Needs Assessment
- Summer Engagement Opportunities



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

WHAT HAVE WE HEARD SO FAR?





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# MIXED BAG LOTS OF DISAGREEMENT ...

- Concerns about/opposition to growth, more density
- Hopes for more affordable housing development (more density is OK)
- Openly expressed concerns about racism in Arlington – from housing advocates and housing opponents and just about everyone in between
- Distrust of for-profit developers, Town government, people who simply don't agree ...
- No more market-rate housing ... but, no realistic ideas about how to leverage 100% affordability
- Are the consultants hearing too much from "pro-housing" groups?
- Are the consultants hearing too much from anti-growth, anti-density groups?



# SMALL-GROUP INTERVIEWS

3 DAYS / 16 INTERVIEWS / 54 PARTICIPANTS / SAMPLE LIST

- Town Meeting Members
- ZBA
- Redevelopment Board
- Conservation Commission
- HPIC
- Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture
- Select Board
- Diversity Task Group
- Open Space Committee
- Envision Arlington
- Disability Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- Tourism & Economic Development
- Sustainable Arlington
- Arlington Fights Racism
- LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission
- Arlington Heights NAPIC
- Housing Corp. of Arlington
- Greater Somerville Homeless Coalition
- Greater Boston Legal Services
- Arlington EATS
- Interested residents
- And more!



# WHEN WE ASKED ... WHY ARLINGTON?

- Proximity to Cambridge, Boston, Somerville
- Access to transit & bike path
- Walkability
- Schools
- Relative affordability compared to neighboring communities
- Most people said they would like to stay in Arlington
- Urban/suburban hybrid

*neighboring communities."*

*"There is a balance of being close to Boston and Cambridge but also far enough to enjoy open space."*

*"You get more bang for your buck compared to*





## WHEN WE ASKED ... WHAT HAS CHANGED?



- Arlington has become much less economically diverse
- Decreased sense of community
- Renovations & teardowns common as property values increase
- Increase in number of homeless people

*"We're talking about three towns globbed into one."*

*"Every year you need a larger income to live here or need to be more willing to spend more of your income."*

*"The Town has become more economically similar. There used to be wider spread of income ranges, but this is slowly disappearing over 30 years."*

A photograph of a row of houses in a residential neighborhood. The houses are multi-story, single-family homes with different architectural styles and colors. Some have porches and stone walls. The scene is set during the day with a clear sky.

## WHEN WE ASKED ... WHAT ARE ARLINGTON'S HOUSING NEEDS?

- Housing affordable at 80% AMI and deeply affordable housing
- Homeownership for seniors to downsize
- Starter homes
- Condos or apartments for families
- "Missing stuff in the middle"
- Smaller units within existing buildings
- Congregate housing

*"There is a bitterness that comes from living in Arlington all these years and being unable to afford to stay."*

*"Innovative housing options need to be explored."*

*"More housing could be inserted as infill if zoning would allow smaller units within a structure."*

*"There is a large unmet need for seniors. It is a constant theme."*

# GOOGLE FORM #1 – 238 RESPONSES

- **WHY ARLINGTON?**
  - Schools
  - Proximity to Boston & Cambridge
  - Transportation Options
- **DO YOU WANT TO STAY?**
  - Most said yes
  - Some unsure
  - Few emphatic no responses
- **REASONS TO STAY**
  - Good commute to job
  - Walkability
  - Neighborhood
  - Family/kids settled
- **REASONS TO LEAVE**
  - Increasing costs
  - Too dense or concerns about becoming too dense
  - Lack of options for seniors
  - Unable to buy
  - Changing character (not explained)



# GOOGLE FORM #1 STRONG ROOTS

*"We plan to stay long-term. We like the community, and the schools are good."*

*"I will stay as long as I am able to live independently. The location is very good for me at this age: easy access to most of the things I want, pleasant open space, easy access to downtown via public transit."*

*"Love the people and the places! Can be in Mass Ave or in the woods within a 10-minute walk either way."*

*"We live in a walkable neighborhood with an active downtown."*

*"I am a life-long resident and couldn't imagine living someplace else."*

# GOOGLE FORM #1

## WHY LEAVE?

*"We might reconsider if the community or school quality changes."*

*"I hope to stay here long-term but will consider leaving if population density growth causes it to become more like a city than a town."*

*"I do hope to stay but housing is an issue. Most rental units are old [and] landlords increasing rents without any improvements."*

*"Sometimes I feel like Arlington is a museum of itself, circa 1970 or so."*





## GOOGLE FORM #1 FRUSTRATION & DISTRUST

*"Is this false participation for the residents? Why by-invite only focus group(s) before the June 9 meeting?"*

*"...If this remains a town with such strong racism embedded in it, and if serious action isn't taken to address flooding concerns, we may leave."*

*"All this lipservice about wanting Arlington to be 'welcoming and diverse' - If this town can not start to talk about the hard, uncomfortable things then it is doomed."*

*"I reached out . . . for support, but have had 2 previous people 'assisting' me on my case and dropped the ball. I'm on my third and not much has been achieved. . . ."*

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# GOOGLE FORM #1

## COST OF LIVING

*"I would love to stay for the rest of my life, but eventually my property taxes will force me out."*

*"My partner and I make too much money to qualify for affordable housing subsidies. But we don't make enough to afford a condo or home in Arlington."*

*.. We lose many young families from my church because they can not afford to buy within Arlington or any near enough community."*

*"I would love to stay long-term.. eventually I will no longer be able to afford my current rent or rent for other apartments in Arlington."*



COMMUNITY FORUM /  
JUNE 9, 2021

# COMMUNITY INPUT

- Need to connect with tenants of affordable units
- Need to speak with disability advocates

*"Any effort to hear from people who aren't residents of town?  
Those are the ones we are excluding."*

*"Creating policy based on the input of largely older, long-term  
homeowners seems to be a recipe to tilt toward the status quo,  
which has some deep structural inequalities."*

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# COMMUNITY FORUM RELATIONSHIP WITH DEVELOPERS



Concern about reliance on developers for affordable housing, but developers will be part of solution: "They're the ones who actually build things."



If developer asks for concessions, Town needs to hold them to a higher standard in terms of the rest of their footprint...



# COMMUNITY FORUM USE OF FUNDS (CPA, CDBG, AHT)



Disagreement about 100% AMI threshold for AHT\*

Mixed views on funding AHA; sense that AHA is "opaque" but AHA needs more resources.

*"More transparency and education about how we invest in projects would help people feel more confident."*

*"Best way to achieve affordable housing is through a concerted effort about seeing what apartments already exist and renovating them."*

*"Invest in new housing developments near public transportation; creates more walkability, an important focus especially because of climate change. Should use CPA funds and the Housing Trust Funds towards [this] and purchasing existing housing too."*

*\*Ed. note: 100% is the maximum income for community housing under the Community Preservation Act.*

# COMMUNITY FORUM

TOPIC:  
ZONING AND  
ACCOMMODATING  
CHANGE IN THE BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT

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"We need to look at our zoning regulations and relax them. And we need a better diversity of people (race, income, etc.) contributing to this conversation."

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"Zoning is a big reason we've lost housing diversity, and it was intentional."

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"We need alternative housing types – scale, size. We can make it easier to build these things."

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"Do not reduce green space."

## GOOGLE FORM #2

# POST-COMMUNITY FORUM

- 7 respondents; all attended the forum
- Respondents *generally agree* there is need for affordable housing, especially for those most in need, but ...

### Consensus lacking:

- Definition of affordable housing
- Use of market solutions to create affordable housing
- Appetite for change, increased density, etc.

### Room for education:

- Rent control
- Tear-downs (Who drives this trend - developers or new owners?)
- Developing on Winchester Golf Course
- Financing of affordable housing

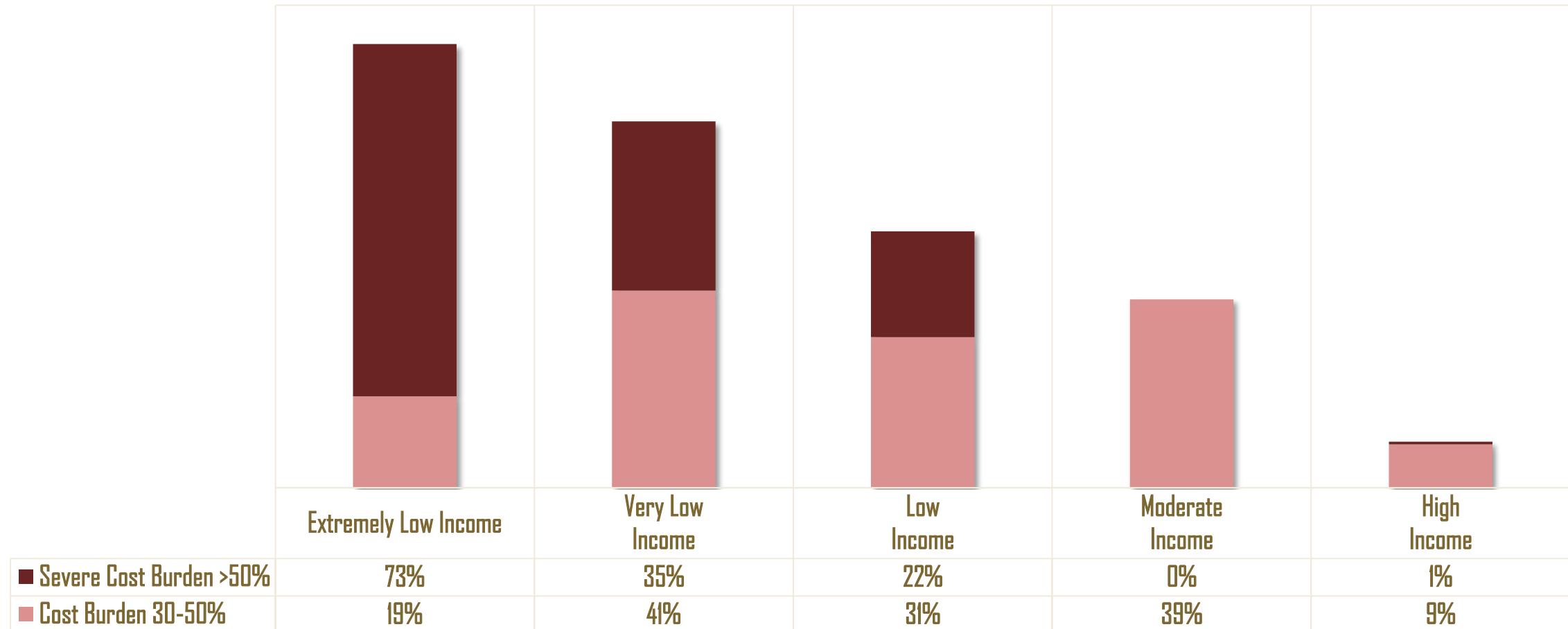


# HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

INITIAL  
OBSERVATIONS

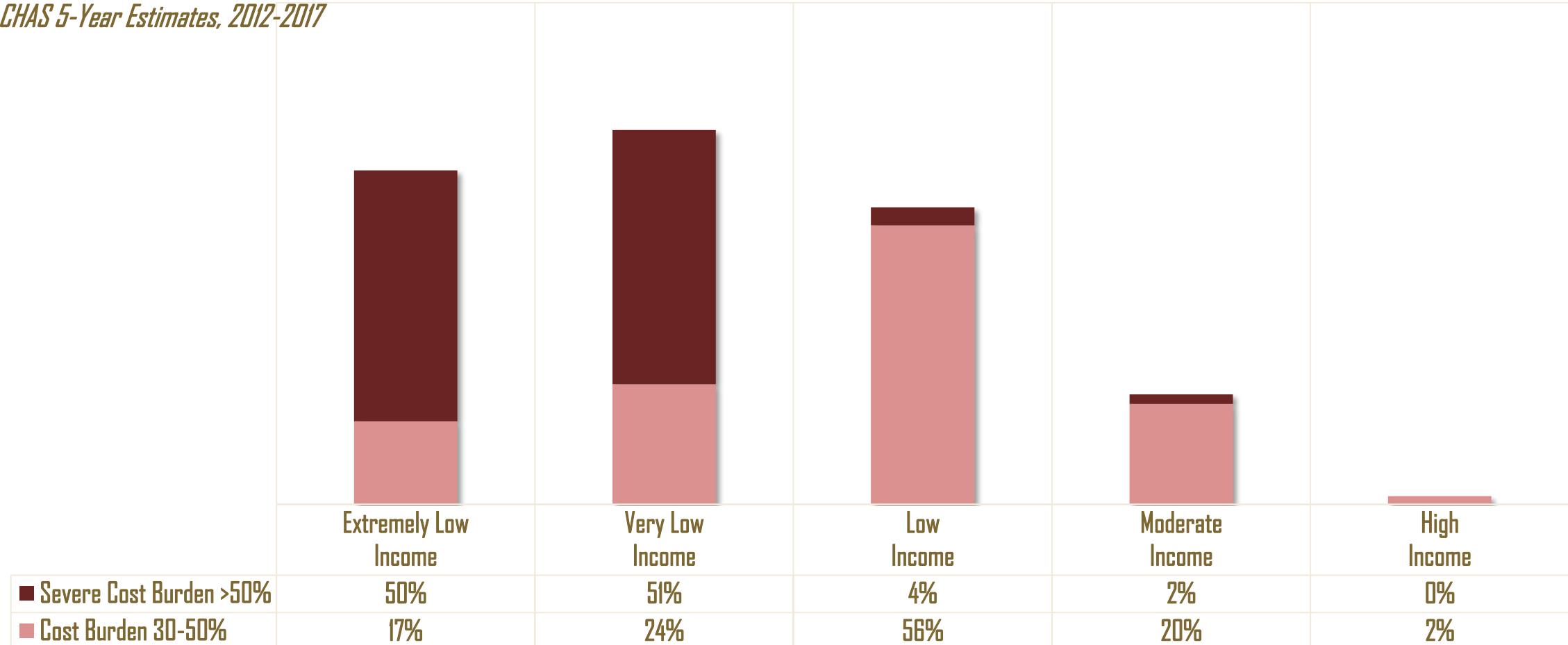
## OWNERS: COST-BURDENED AND SEVERELY COST-BURDENED

Source: CHAS 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2017



## RENTERS: COST-BURDENED AND SEVERELY COST-BURDENED

Source: CHAS 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2017



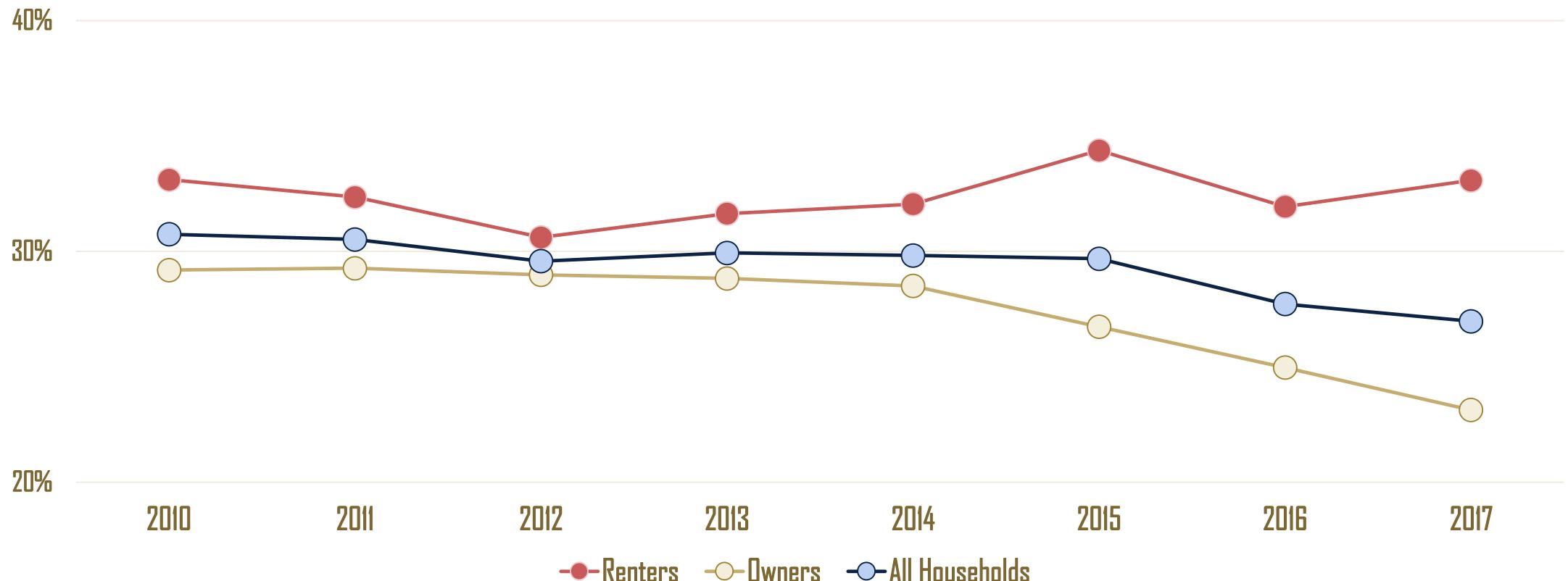
## FINANCIAL CHARACTERISTICS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Source: CHAS 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2017

Household Type	Low-to-Moderate Income Households					Cost-Burdened Households			
	Total	<30% AMI	30-50% AMI	50-80% AMI	ALL LMI HHLDs	Cost Burden 30-50%	Severe Cost Burden >50%	ALL COST-BURDENED HHLDs	
Elderly Family	2,425	13%	10%	12%	34%	17%	9%	25%	
Elderly Nonfamily	2,995	31%	21%	12%	64% 	24%	26%	50% 	
Small Related (2-4 Persons)	8,140	2%	4%	5%	12%	11%	6%	17%	
Large Related (5+ Persons)	914	3%	4%	2%	9%	15%	4%	19%	
Other	4,155	13%	12%	12%	37%	17%	16%	33%	
All Households	18,629	11%	9%	9%	Total LMI 29%	15%	12%	Total Cost-Burdened 27%	

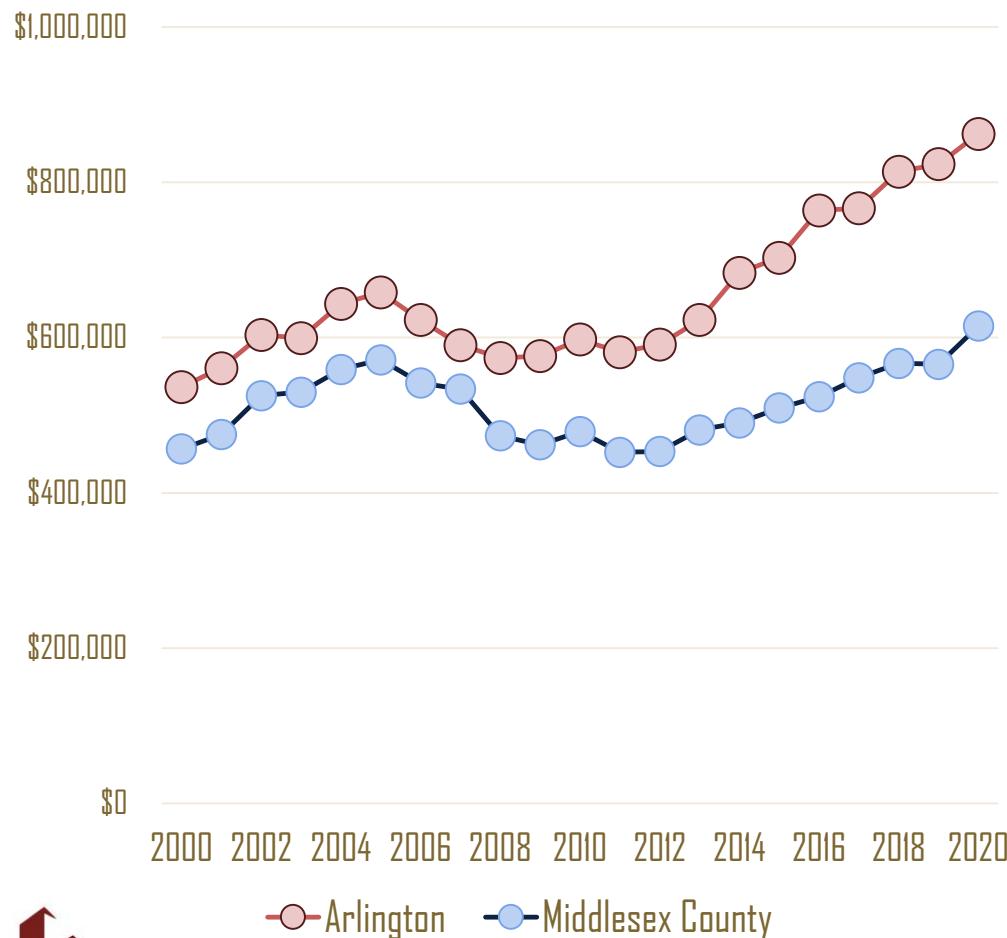
## COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

*Source: CHAS 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2017*



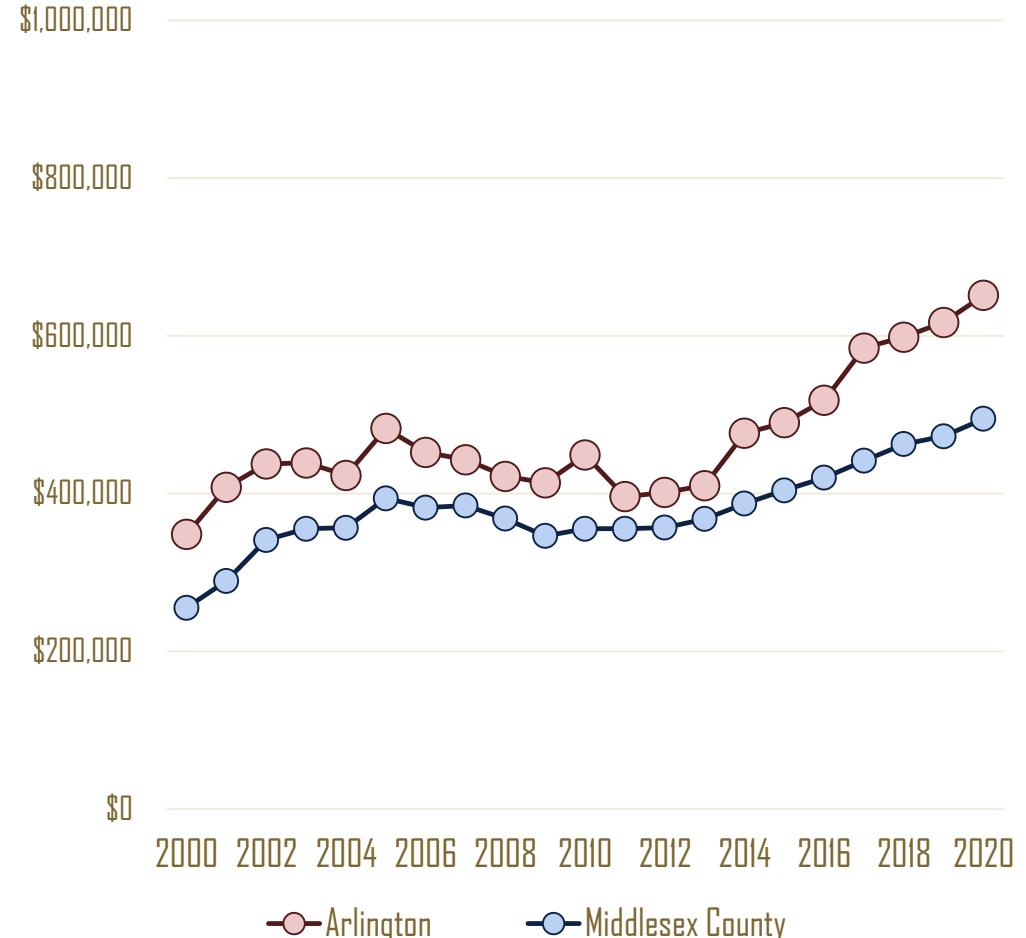
## MEDIAN SALE PRICE – SF HOME

*Source: Bunker & Tradesman*

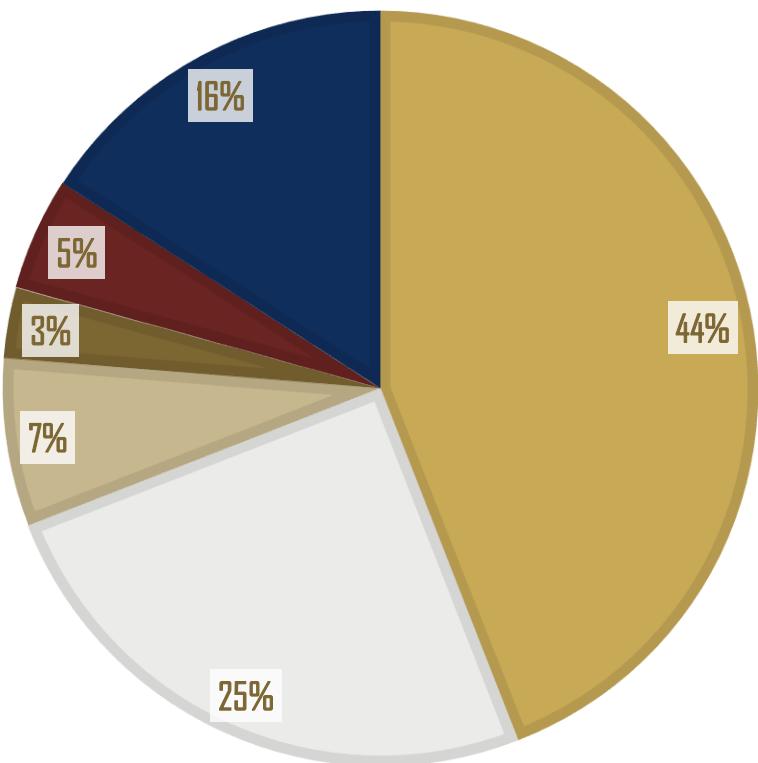


## MEDIAN SALE PRICE – CONDO

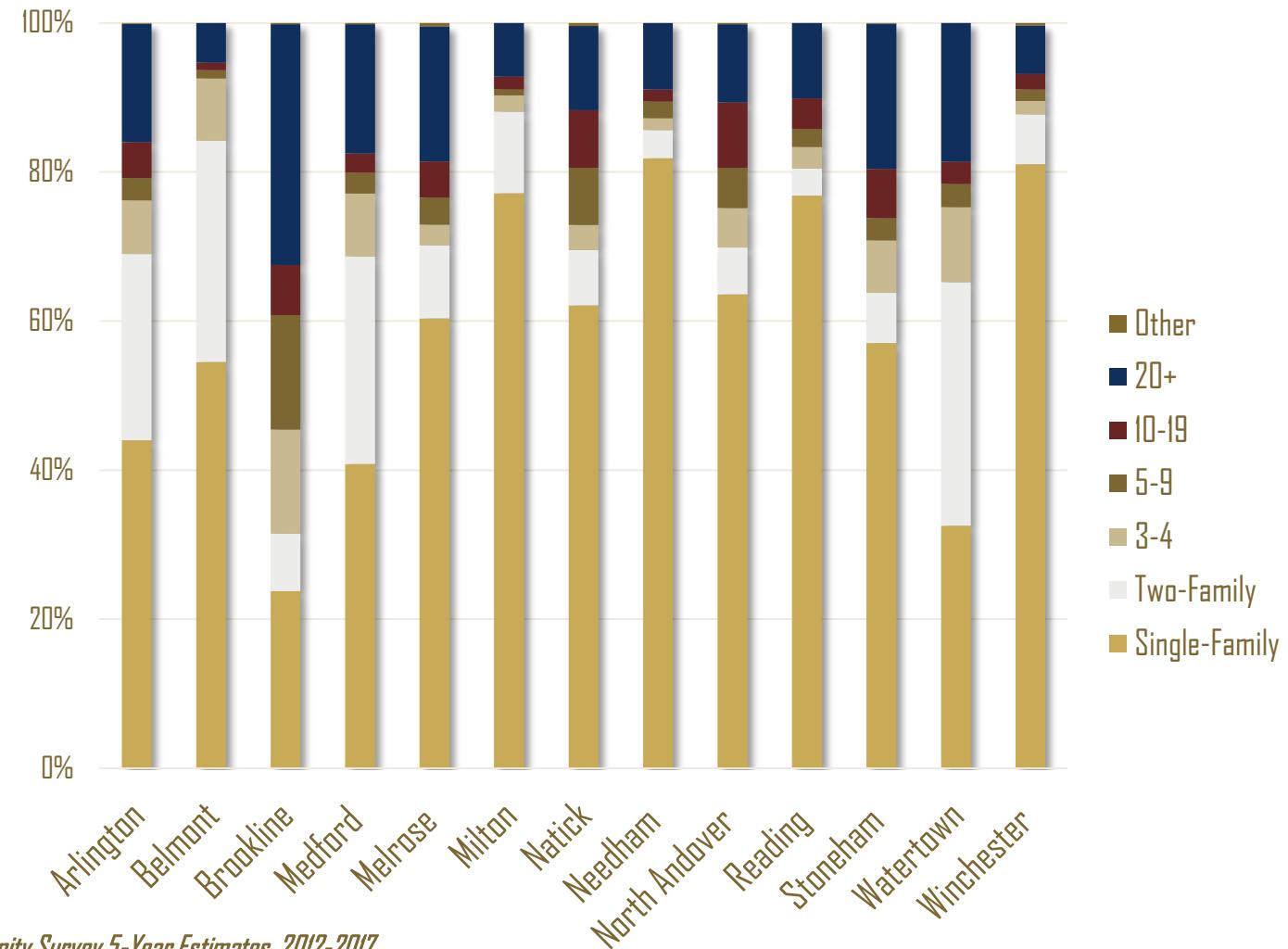
*Source: Bunker & Tradesman*



## ARLINGTON HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE



## COMPARISON COMMUNITIES HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE

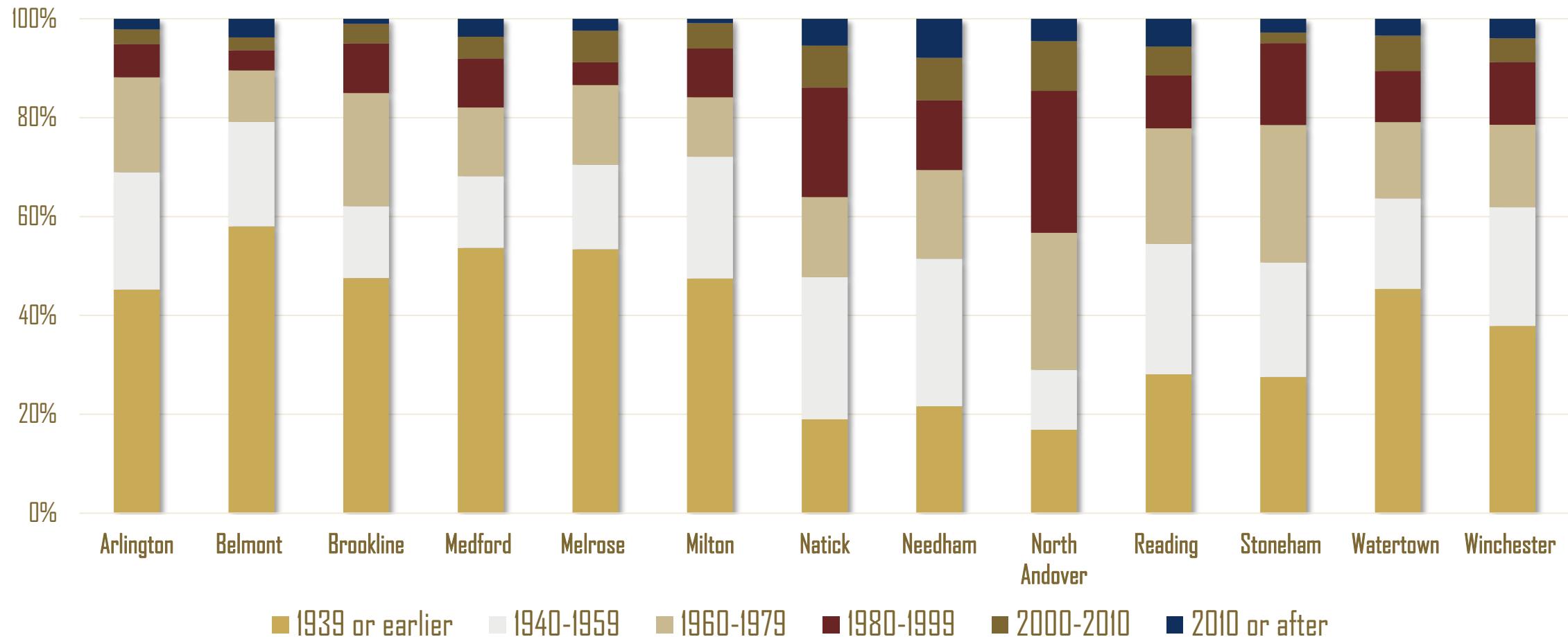


Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2017



## PERCENT HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR BUILT

*Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2014-2019*



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

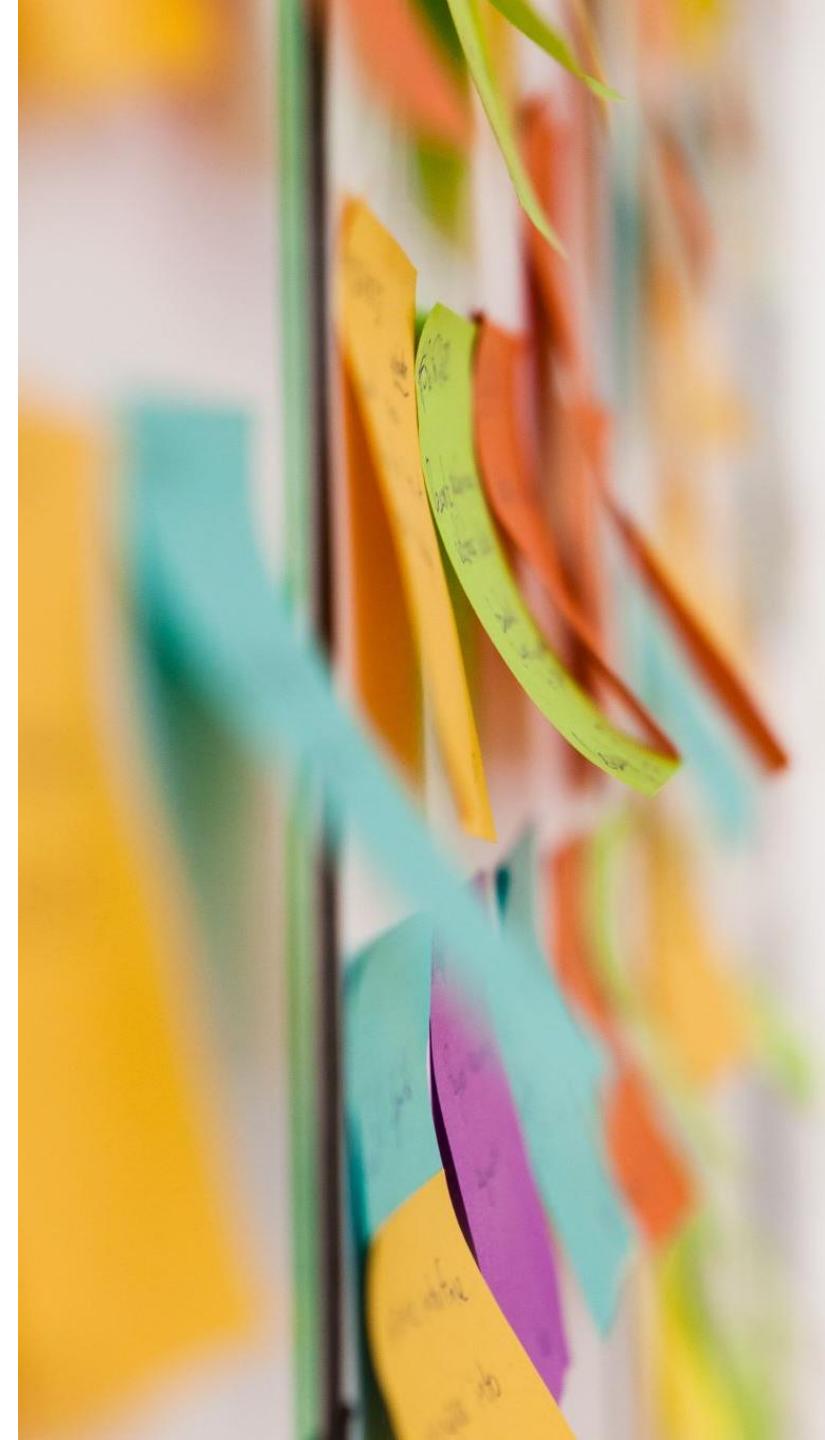
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HOW CAN THE HOUSING PLAN  
IMPLEMENTATION COMMUNITY  
HELP?

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# “MEETING IN A BOX”

- Host a small get-together with people who didn't have a chance to participate in the Community Forum
- Using questions similar to those discussed at the Community Forum, ask your participants to weigh in and offer their opinions and ideas
- Keep a record of attendees, facilitators, and note takers
- Write up a discussion summary (a bullet-point list is fine!)
- Send the sign-in sheets, individual participant forms, raw notes, and your summary to Kelly Lynema





# FARMER'S MARKET



# FAIR HOUSING COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

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JULY 13, 2021 7-8:30  
WHO CAN LIVE HERE, WHO DECIDES & WHY?

# PROJECT TIMELINE TARGETS

